

Te Tāhū o te Ture  
**Statement  
of Intent**

2023-2027



MINISTRY OF  
**JUSTICE**  
*Tāhū o te Ture*

*Te Tāhū o te Ture is the Māori name for the Ministry of Justice bestowed to our Ministry by respected kaumātua Tā John Clarke. Tāhū is the ridge pole that is the main support structure of a whareniui or house. Ture is the law.*

*Our name touches on the connection between the ridge pole that supports a house and the role our Ministry plays in supporting democracy and the rule of law in Aotearoa New Zealand. Te Tāhū o te Ture as a name was developed after Tā John Clarke talked with a number of kaumātua. It was adopted by the Ministry of Justice in 2003, following the merger of the old Ministry and Department for Courts.*

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Presented to the House of Representatives in accordance with section 39 of the Public Finance Act 1989.



**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

# Contents

<b>Minister of Justice’s statement</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Chief Executive’s foreword</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Our strategic context</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>What we seek to achieve</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>Our strategy</b>	<b>09</b>
Bring the strength of communities into courts and tribunals	11
Reduce the harm experienced by victims and their whānau	12
Steward our policy and regulatory systems	13
Improve access and experiences for participants in courts and tribunals	14
Play a leading role to deliver an integrated sector-wide response	15
Improve justice outcomes for Māori	16
Build a Ministry where all our people thrive	17
<b>What we do</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Managing our corporate responsibilities</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>How we measure our performance</b>	<b>21</b>

# Minister of Justice's statement



The Government is continuing to work hard to keep our communities safe, break the cycle of offending and tackle the root causes of crime.

We are also carefully addressing the needs of victims in the criminal justice system, with the aim of achieving lasting change.

To continue to keep our communities safe we have passed or introduced legislation that gives police more powers to pursue organised crime and strengthened counter-terrorism regimes.

We have increased community participation in alcohol licensing decisions, improved access to legal aid, reduced delays in the Family Court, expanded the Māori electoral option, and improved the transparency of the electoral donations regime.

Access to justice for all New Zealanders is a fundamental right. To that end I am aware the Ministry is working hard alongside the judiciary to address backlogs in the system, which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Changes to Legal Aid have now been implemented, meaning improved access to justice for people who cannot afford a lawyer. From 1 January 2023 eligibility settings for legal aid increased by 15%, making approximately 93,000 more people eligible for aid. Increases to repayment thresholds came into effect at the same time, meaning people receiving legal aid may receive lower repayment amounts as well.

The Ministry also continues to use technology to ensure access to justice, and this is only set to increase. For example, audio-visual usage has increased by 137 percent in the District Court, from 30,504 events in 2018, to 72,381 events in 2022.

And over the next few years, a new digital case management system called Te Au Reka will help to transform the administration of justice in New Zealand, starting with the Family Court.

I acknowledge that the Ministry of Justice, Te Tāhū o te Ture has set seven key priorities including improving justice outcomes for Māori, building community connections, reducing further harm for victims, improving court and tribunal experiences, stewarding its policy and regulatory systems, playing a leading role in delivering an integrated sector-wide response, and being an organisation where all of its people thrive.

There is now a real opportunity to transform how policy and legislation is developed, justice services are designed and delivered, and investments are made. Transformation will come from partnering with iwi/Māori and working with local communities, the judiciary and others in the sector.

I am satisfied that the information on strategic intentions prepared by the Ministry of Justice is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the Government.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ginny Andersen', written in a cursive style.

**Hon Ginny Andersen**  
Minister of Justice

# Chief Executive's foreword



Our overarching purpose for the Ministry of Justice, Te Tāhū o te Ture is to strengthen people's trust in the law of Aotearoa New Zealand.

It is a powerful purpose. It captures the different elements of our work, and the contributions we make to enhance trust in the law, whether those things are oriented towards our work across the Courts, the Executive or the Legislature. If people have trust in the law, they will have more confidence across their lives.

The word strengthen is intentional. It emphasises our need to do better and to be always working to build on the levels of trust people have in all aspects of the justice system.

Within the strategy, we have identified seven key priorities, concentrating on what is most important to sharpen our focus and effectiveness. This includes building community connections, reducing further harm for victims, improving court experiences, stewarding our policy and regulatory systems, and playing a leading role in delivering an integrated sector-wide response.

Two priorities weave their way through all the others. One of them is to improve justice outcomes for Māori. This ensures we are constantly asking ourselves how we can better meet our responsibilities to Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi and transform ourselves as an organisation, externally and internally.

The second is building a Ministry where all our people thrive. The focus here is on people and wellbeing, as well as having the tools, physical environment and infrastructure needed to achieve our purpose.

Our challenge is to ensure our purpose and strategy guide our mahi and create an environment where we can thrive and deliver for the people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Statement of Responsibility

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I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information on strategic intentions for the Ministry of Justice. This information has been prepared in accordance with section 38 and section 40 of the Public Finance Act 1989.

**Andrew Kibblewhite**  
Secretary for Justice  
Pou Whakarae mō te Ture

# Our strategic context

Societal expectations are continually evolving and our responses need to adapt.

The period since 2020 has been tumultuous, with the COVID-19 pandemic triggering or accelerating global transformations that have significantly impacted Aotearoa New Zealand.

Trust in democratic institutions worldwide is under threat, partly due to the spread of misinformation and disinformation, and Aotearoa New Zealand has not been immune to this trend. The emergence of generative artificial intelligence provides an opportunity for misuse to propagate misleading information further.

The downstream effects of the pandemic and the response to it are still being felt. These range from detrimental wellbeing and development effects on youth, through to labour market and supply constraints.

While overall victimisation is steady (as measured by the New Zealand Crime and Victim Survey), there have been recent spikes in reports of youth and retail crime, and family harm.

We continue to use our levers, whether legislative changes, operational initiatives in the courts in conjunction with the judiciary or with our sector partners to work to ensure people and communities are kept safe now and into the future.

Reducing court delays is critical to improving access to justice and improving trust and confidence in the courts and the rule of law. This is a priority for both the Government and the judiciary.

There have been three main drivers for the delays:

- people pleading guilty later in the criminal court process
- more adjournments of court events to a later date as parties are not prepared to proceed at their court event and more people electing jury trials which generally take longer to resolve
- court pressures have also been exacerbated by the COVID-19 restrictions, particularly in the Auckland courts and for jury trials – both of which have a large impact on overall system resourcing.

Courts are also experiencing an increased demand for court services, and a growing complexity in cases which results in delays in the progression of cases.

The Ministry is working closely with the judiciary and justice sector partners on initiatives to help address court delays.

The response to the pandemic also accelerated some positive changes, aligned with societal expectations for easier and more widespread use of digital technology. Increased use of audio-visual technology was rolled out in multiple courts, providing opportunities for virtual delivery of court events, where appropriate. A new service was created to enable participants to file documents and pay court fees electronically. Technology also provides enhanced engagement channels with communities.

Continued community engagement also brings increased expectations of not just being consulted with on potential government interventions like justice services, but the design and development of those services. While there are greater opportunities and methods for engaging with communities, we are mindful not to exceed their capacity and capability.

Beyond the pandemic-related changes, our operating environment for the justice system is in a state of evolution.

Family violence and sexual violence is a significant issue for Aotearoa New Zealand. We remain amongst the highest reported rates of family violence and sexual violence in the developed world.

Te Aorerekura – Aotearoa’s first National Strategy for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence – sets a collective focus for government departments to work with iwi, hapū, communities, family violence and sexual violence specialists, to eliminate family violence and sexual violence for good. The Ministry is committed to this goal.

We continue to work collaboratively with our sector partners to drive transformation of the justice system, with support from Sector Directorate. The Directorate is hosted by the Ministry of Justice but remains independent and accountable to the chief executives of the sector agencies, as the Justice Sector Leadership Board.

This partnership has been further enhanced by justice sector agencies’ participating in a public finance modernisation pilot, the Justice Cluster. The cluster seeks to collaboratively progress significant initiatives in the criminal justice system, across the agencies. The cluster shares key priority areas and strategic outcomes with the objective of increasing collaboration across public service agencies, improving value for money, and strengthening delivery of the Government’s wellbeing priorities. Key cluster initiatives, including Te Ao Mārama (see page 11) are critical for progressing and achieving our strategy for victims and defendants who participate in the justice system, and their families and whānau.

Our Statement of Intent sets out how we plan to deliver on our purpose to strengthen people’s trust in the law of Aotearoa New Zealand. It outlines our strategy and strategic priorities, what we seek to achieve and how we will measure progress.

# What we seek to achieve

Our outcomes represent what the Ministry seeks to uphold and strengthen within Aotearoa New Zealand for the benefit of its people. These long-term outcomes are broadly focused on Aotearoa New Zealand's constitutional arrangements and legitimacy of the justice system, human rights and shifting the justice system to better serve communities.

## New Zealand's constitution and justice system is regarded as legitimate by all communities across Aotearoa New Zealand

Government institutions that can retain the trust of everyone are vital for the wellbeing of everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi is the foundation of our constitutional arrangements. We respect Tino Rangatiratanga and uphold the obligations of the Crown in exercising Kāwanatanga.

Trusted constitutional arrangements are underpinned by values like inclusion, equity, open and democratic government, respect for human rights and the rule of law (which includes that everybody – including the government – is equal before the law).

The legitimacy of the justice system ensures that people can rely on it to get their justice issues resolved. Judicial decision-makers must be seen as fair and independent of the government and other vested interests.

Legal certainty and trust in justice institutions, such as the courts, contribute to economic performance and make Aotearoa New Zealand an attractive investment destination.

Not all people will engage directly with justice services, but they need to be confident that they're safe, laws are upheld and their rights are protected.

## The people of New Zealand's human rights are protected and upheld

Human rights uphold the dignity and worth of all people. They are basic standards that influence how we live together and how we recognise the interests of other people and the community. They also govern the relationship between people, and groups of people and the government.

Human rights – whether they are civil, political, economic, social or cultural rights – are vital for the development of a diverse, inclusive and democratic society that respects the rule of law, human dignity, wellbeing, equality and freedom.

<p><b>Further harm, including revictimisation and reoffending, is prevented through solutions designed in partnership with communities</b></p>	<p><b>People can access justice services in ways that suit their circumstances, and they can expect to experience supported, timely and effective responses</b></p>
<p>The risks of (further) harm of justice system involvement are managed with appropriate, culturally relevant responses and include therapeutic interventions and support, and specialist interventions for family violence and sexual violence.</p> <p>The unique strengths of iwi, hapū and communities are respected, enabling them to lead and shape the design and delivery of justice services that will work now and for future generations.</p>	<p>Access to justice is about ensuring that people and businesses that seek to resolve disputes or seek justice can use the legal system to obtain an outcome by means of a fair and open process.</p> <p>The ways that people access the justice system, and their strengths and needs, are diverse. People who come through the justice system or who use its services are often at their most vulnerable. The different support mechanisms available include information, advice and support, to obtaining legal representation and resolution in the courts. Everyone, regardless of their circumstances, including financial means, should be able to access justice and receive the appropriate support to participate meaningfully.</p> <p>Justice services are responsive, timely, accessible and cost effective. Processes are transparent, impartial, and safe. The aim is that they will receive a safe and appropriate response which cause no further harm, and spend as little time in the courts system as possible.</p> <p>The extent of harm caused by court delays and risks associated with inefficient paper-based or manual processes, is significantly reduced.</p>
<p><b>Māori experience an equitable justice system that drives positive intergenerational outcomes. Kia tū tangata ai te Māori i tōna Māoritanga</b></p>	<p><b>The justice system recognises and responds to victims' trauma and risk</b></p>
<p>Underpinning justice system reform is the justice sector's commitment to reforming the system to respond to Māori leadership, honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi obligations, and make room for Māori-led solutions.</p> <p>For generations, Māori have been impacted by a system that perpetuates inequitable outcomes. Calls for reform of the justice system have been made over decades, particularly by Māori, experts and academics.</p> <p>Reform will see the justice system becoming culturally competent and responsive to Māori, while delivering equitable intergenerational outcomes for all through Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi partnerships, shared-decision making, and support for Māori-led solutions.</p>	<p>A victim of crime's experience of the criminal justice system can be complex and challenging and these experiences can have a significant impact on the victim's mental health and well-being.</p> <p>Victims and their whānau receive appropriate support and resources to participate safely in all parts of the criminal justice process, and their voices are heard and respected in accordance with the law.</p> <p>Victims of family violence, abuse and neglect receive appropriate support and resources to participate safely in the family and child protection justice process, and their voices are heard and respected in accordance with the law.</p> <p>The legislative framework articulating victims' rights and interests in all parts of the justice system and agencies' responsibilities towards victims, is modern and effective.</p>

# Our strategy

Our strategy sets out how we will set ourselves up to deliver on these outcomes over the next four years, what we want to achieve, the positive impacts we want to make, and what success will look and feel like.

## Our purpose

**To strengthen people’s trust in the law of Aotearoa New Zealand**

## Our priorities



## Our values

**Whakamana** **Toka Tū** **Ākina** **Eke Panuku**  
**Respect** **Integrity** **Service** **Excellence**

### Our purpose

Our purpose statement guides what we do every day – To strengthen people’s trust in the law of Aotearoa New Zealand. To help describe the meaning behind our purpose statement, it is best to look at its individual parts:

- *Strengthen*: our system is strong by international standards and we’re proud of that – but we know we can do better.
- *Trust*: everything comes down to the people in Aotearoa New Zealand having trust that their rights are protected, that democratic institutions are strong and that they will be treated fairly if disputes arise.
- *The law*: it’s why we’re here - the law is at the heart of what we do.
- *Aotearoa New Zealand*: it’s unique to us - it’s about our people, our systems and processes, and the law of our country.

### Our priorities

Our priorities are the areas that will remain fundamentally important to the Ministry over the medium-term. Two of these priorities – Improve justice outcomes for Māori and Build a Ministry where all our people thrive – weave across the whole of our strategy.

### Our values

Our values underpin everything we do – the actions we take, the decisions we make and the relationships we build. Our success isn’t just about what we do; it’s how we do things that really makes the difference. The Ministry’s values – Whakamana – Respect, Toka Tū – Integrity, Ākina – Service and Eke Panuku – Excellence – are often referred to as ‘RISE’ (using the first letter of each of the English words).

## Working with others

The knowledge and insights of communities in Aotearoa New Zealand are vital to informing and delivering the work needed to progress these priorities. We are committed to building meaningful and enduring relationships with communities, including iwi and hapū - both directly through involvement in programmes of work, as well as through formal channels such as the National Iwi Chairs Forum, where we will collaborate on shared areas of interest relating to justice.

We will also rely on our relationships with our justice sector partners, other agencies in the public service and Ministers to inform and deliver the work underpinning our strategy.

Non-Governmental Organisations and professional providers are critical to the successful achievement of the outcomes. We are committed to the Social Sector Commissioning principles.



# Bring the strength of communities into courts and tribunals

To strengthen people's trust in the law we need to listen to the people who participate in and rely on the effective operation of the justice system. We must understand the needs and aspirations of the people of Aotearoa New Zealand and take the lead from communities in the design of the system and the services required, while maintaining the rule of law.

Policy and service design is increasingly being designed and developed using collaborative models, drawing on the engagement with participants in the system and the broader public. These ways of working help us to better understand challenges, issues and risks and the different perspectives provide a richer picture to aid the development of solutions.

We want to enhance and maintain meaningful relationships with communities, including Māori communities, so that consultation and collaboration doesn't put unreasonable and counterproductive burdens on communities.

Our people need to be well equipped to connect and communicate with the various participants within the system, our partners and New Zealanders as a whole. We'll also explore the use of and build new channels to engage with people more effectively, so they get the information they need.



## TO ACHIEVE OUR PURPOSE, WE WILL:

- Implement Te Ao Mārama in the District Court, by listening to and engaging with communities to improve the experience for all people who participate in the court system
- Partner with iwi, hapū, local communities and people who have lived experience of our justice system.

## Te Ao Mārama

Te Ao Mārama is a judicially led programme that will improve the experience for all people who participate in the District Court, including victims and whānau.

In November 2020, the Chief District Court Judge, Judge Heemi Taumaunu, announced Te Ao Mārama, the vision for change for the District Court. This vision has been developed as the District Court's response to longstanding intergenerational calls for change to the justice system and District Court.

The concept te ao mārama means 'the world of light' or moving from the dark to the enlightened world.

The vision is about an enlightened world where all people can come to court to seek justice and be seen, understood and meaningfully participate.

The change Te Ao Mārama creates will see the District Court become more equitable, people-centred, and better serving of its communities.

Te Ao Mārama will partner with iwi and engage with communities to design and deliver services that better reflect the diversity, strengths and needs of each community. We will take best practice approaches from solution-focused and therapeutic courts and tailor these for an initial 13 District Court locations, with the remaining 45 locations able to implement select aspects of the initiative.

# Reduce the harm experienced by victims and their whānau

Fulfilling our obligations to meet the rights and interests of victims and championing the voices of victims is a priority for the Ministry and the justice sector agencies. We are continuing to increase our awareness of, and responsiveness to victims. This change is being driven by calls from victims, experts, the public and successive governments to improve victims' experience of the justice system and other relevant agencies' services.

We are responding accordingly and working with other justice sector agencies to strengthen public trust in the justice system for victims of crime. A new operating model is being developed that seeks to improve the way victims are treated in the criminal justice system. This includes addressing safety planning for victims of serious crime, supporting child victims of sexual violence and enhancing the way victim's views are included in bail decisions. We are ensuring the legislative framework which articulates victims' rights and interests is modern and effective, and victims' rights and interests are taken into consideration in legislation and practice.

A particular area of focus is our work with Te Puna Aonui to improve the justice sector's response to family violence and sexual violence. Many New Zealanders know through personal experience the devastating impact family violence and sexual violence have on families, whānau and communities.

Looking ahead, initiatives to assist victims include the growth and realisation of Te Ao Mārama (see page 11) which will make it easier for victims of crime to engage with the District Court, and Te Au Reka (digital case management, see page 14) that will help to transform the administration of justice in Aotearoa New Zealand. Te Au Reka will make it easier for people to interact with the court system, improve access to justice and reduce the stress and disruption experienced by victims when participating in court proceedings.



## TO ACHIEVE OUR PURPOSE, WE WILL:

- Implement Te Ao Mārama approaches in an initial 13 District Court locations to make it easier for victims to engage with the court
- Work across the justice sector and other agencies to progress work to improve victims' experience of the justice system
- Work with justice sector agencies to progress and deliver the three-year victims work programme to improve victims' experience of the criminal justice system
- Provide government agencies and the government with findings from the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey to inform their understanding of the nature and level of victimisation in Aotearoa New Zealand and the effectiveness of government policies on crime
- Support the Chief Victims Advisor to provide independent advice to the Minister of Justice on justice sector-wide strategy and coordination relevant to victims
- Te Au Reka will enable victims to have better information about what is happening on their case. They will have access to more information and know when events are scheduled so they are better able to participate in the process.

# Steward our policy and regulatory systems

Stewardship is about continuous improvement and questioning and testing whether the systems we have are fit for purpose and deliver the best value to all New Zealanders. Effective stewardship requires the Ministry to be proactive and collaborative, so that regulatory systems adapt to changing circumstances in a timely way.

We are responsible for the law underpinning 52 regulatory systems across seven regulatory areas:

- courts and tribunals
- criminal justice and victims (the justice system mechanisms for dealing with crimes)
- criminal law (the definition and enforcement, and punishment of criminal offences)
- family relationships
- civil law (laws that govern legal rights and responsibilities in interactions between private individuals)
- constitutional law
- and regulation of some occupations.

As part of this role, we administer 154 pieces of legislation. We also design and deliver services to implement the law and related policies in courts, monitor the outcomes of the legislation and policies to assess whether they are achieving the intended benefits, where appropriate ensure compliance, and inform and educate the public and court participants about relevant matters.

These systems set out some of our most important constitutional foundations, including laws relating to our system of representative democracy, our head of state, Te Tiriti o Waitangi/ Treaty of Waitangi, the structure and independence of the courts, and protections for people against unreasonable or unfair exercising of state power.

By monitoring and caring for these systems, we ensure they remain fit for purpose over the long-term.



## TO ACHIEVE OUR PURPOSE, WE WILL:

- Build a sustainable policy stewardship capability
- Actively collaborate across all parts of the regulatory system, including policy, service design and delivery, monitoring and evaluation, information and education, compliance and enforcement
- Over time, monitor, review and report on the performance of regulatory systems in light of changing circumstances
- Implement and comply with good regulatory practice.

# Improve access and experiences for participants in courts and tribunals

Many people coming to courts and tribunals are vulnerable.

The ways that people access the justice system, and the support they need to participate meaningfully, are diverse. We want to make sure that everyone, regardless of their financial means, can access justice and receive appropriate support to participate.

Providing access to justice requires:

- clear and accessible law so that people know and understand their rights
- easy access to mechanisms that enable people to enforce their rights, including, but not limited to, courts and tribunals

- a legal market that provides quality legal services at a price that litigants can afford
- fair and impartial procedures that are easy to navigate, and protect our most vulnerable
- timely resolution of all court proceedings, including reducing backlogs.

The efficiency and integrity of court and tribunal processes has a significant impact on people's wellbeing and ability to move on with their lives.



## TO ACHIEVE OUR PURPOSE, WE WILL:

- Work with our sector partners to reduce backlogs in the courts
- Support operational and legislative improvements to the legal aid system
- Progress a work programme for the Family Court
- Introduce a digital case management system, Te Au Reka, making it easier for users to interact with a more modern court that is trusted, safe and responsive, and enabling the court to operate modern and proactive case progression practices
- Simplify court proceedings for participants and their whānau, including plain language information
- Increase the public's access to tenancy/dispute tribunal decisions.

## Te Au Reka

In this major initiative, the Ministry and the judiciary are setting out to modernise the administration of justice through the courts and tribunals of Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes the development of a new digital case management service, called Te Au Reka, to support modern and effective case management, judicial decision making, court and tribunal management, and enabling participants to engage with the court. Te Au Reka enables access to justice and will touch the lives of all those who access and participate in our courts and tribunals, including the Ministry and the Judiciary.

Over the coming years, we will be digitising many of the processes of our courts and tribunals. When complete, engaging with the courts and tribunals will be simpler, faster, and easier.

Te Au Reka will be implemented in three phases, starting in the Family Court.

# Play a leading role to deliver an integrated sector-wide response

We work closely with our justice sector partners<sup>2</sup> to make Aotearoa New Zealand safer and to deliver accessible justice services and better outcomes for all New Zealanders.

We support the Justice Sector Leadership Board, comprised of justice sector chief executives and chaired by the Secretary for Justice.

The Justice Sector Leadership Board has considerable ambitions for continued transformation across the justice sector. To support these ambitions, the Justice Sector Leadership Board is strengthening the justice sector's ability to collaborate and hone strategy, performance and investment; this includes a new approach to the Budget process, a Cluster. The Cluster shares key priority areas and strategic outcomes with the objective of increasing collaboration across public service agencies, improving value for money, and strengthening delivery of the Government's wellbeing priorities. Together, we have been able to tell a stronger story of system-wide change and identify areas of historic underinvestment in the justice system.



## TO ACHIEVE OUR PURPOSE, WE WILL:

- Partner with the Justice Sector Leadership Board to advance the justice sector investment process, including monitoring and reporting
- Collaborate with our justice sector partners to progress work to improve victim's experience of the criminal justice system
- Work with our sector partners to reduce backlogs in the courts
- Connect with Te Puna Aonui as we deliver our commitment to Te Aorerekura, the national strategy for the elimination of family violence and sexual violence
- Deliver Justice Sector Projections to provide key insights into the impact of legislative, policy and operational changes across the sector
- Deliver the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey to build the sector's understanding of the nature and level of victimisation in Aotearoa New Zealand and the effectiveness of government policies on crime
- Use data and insights to inform our sector partners' understanding of the current and future resourcing of courts and prisons.

<sup>2</sup>Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa - New Zealand Police, Ara Poutama Aotearoa - Department of Corrections, Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children, Te Tari Ture o te Karauna - Crown Law Office and Te Tari Hara Taware - Serious Fraud Office

# Improve justice outcomes for Māori

## ***Mai i te pō, ki te whaiao, ki te ao mārama.***

*From out of the darkness, to the world of being, to the world of enlightenment.*

We are committed to improving justice outcomes for Māori. We will do this by better understanding Māori aspirations for outcomes in the justice system and reflecting these within the Ministry's Māori Outcomes Framework – Te Whaiao – so that Ministry initiatives can more clearly track towards meeting these outcomes.

We acknowledge that the justice system does not always work for Māori. We need to set a new trajectory that builds on what works and invest in new ways forward.

Improving justice outcomes for Māori means that we need to change the way we work and what we do. For example, many Māori (including victims) see the courts as part of a systemically racist justice system. Inequities in justice outcomes persist. These are most starkly seen in both the criminal and family justice systems, where Māori are disproportionately represented at every stage. This has led to consistently lower levels of trust and confidence in the justice system.

In response we will make changes so that Māori are able to engage and fully participate in court processes, the strength of iwi and whānau are brought into the court room and court processes, identify where policies and processes require changes in order to address inequities, and ensure that court staff and judiciary have tools they need to engage in culturally appropriate ways.

We seek to improve outcomes for Māori to not only address the persistent system inequities but also to understand the issues Māori face across the entire system and where possible, begin the work to re-examine our system in all its parts. We need to work towards a system that heals, restores, and creates equity overall.



### **TO ACHIEVE OUR PURPOSE, WE WILL:**

- Draw on our partnerships with our Tiriti partners and create new partnerships with Māori to understand what improving justice outcomes for Māori means for them
- Work through Te Whaiao, our Māori Outcomes Framework to ensure that action and investment across the Ministry will deliver on meaningful shifts for Māori; that can be measured
- Prioritise and invest in solutions that specifically lead to transformational outcomes for Māori in the justice system
- Look to legislation and policy to identify where amendments are required to strengthen settings to address inequity.



# Build a Ministry where all our people thrive

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Our performance as a team determines our ability to deliver on our strategic priorities. We want our Ministry to be a place where our people can come to work feeling safe and supported to be themselves and are encouraged to reach their potential and to play their part in our Ministry's successes.

The Ministry is a place where our people:

- experience a connection toward a shared cause and have a clear line of sight between their work and the Ministry's goals
- know their work matters, and have greater opportunities so they can flourish within the Ministry
- can do their best job because they have the information, tools and physical environment they need to be successful

- know that their wellbeing is prioritised by our leaders and in the workplace
- feel safe expressing their diversity and perspectives in the workplace.

We want our Ministry to be a place where our people feel connected, valued and part of a strong and positive culture.



**TO ACHIEVE  
OUR PURPOSE,  
WE WILL:**

- Develop and implement a workforce strategy so we are clear on the talent and capabilities we need in our leadership and people
- Implement effective Wellbeing, and Inclusion & Diversity strategies
- Improve critical physical, digital and cyber security infrastructure
- Keep our people and our critical information safe.

# What we do

The Ministry of Justice is unique in the way we operate. We are the only agency in the public service that works across all three branches of government. We serve and support the executive, the legislature, and the independent judiciary. These three branches of government also operate independently from one another, a principle known as the 'separation of powers'.

## Our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi is fundamental to Aotearoa New Zealand's constitutional arrangements. It establishes and guides the relationship between the Crown in Aotearoa New Zealand (embodied by our government) and Māori.

Ministry of Justice, Te Tāhū o te Ture is committed to honouring our Tiriti obligations and continues to partner with Māori, and increase our own understanding and capability in te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori to improve justice outcomes for Māori.

## Advising the government of the day

Our role is to serve the government through the provision of advice on New Zealand's justice system, including the laws and practices relating to the constitutional arrangements and exercise of public power by state institutions. For example, we:

- provide policy advice, informed by Māori perspectives, to the government of the day on all areas of the justice portfolio
- provide advice on other agencies' policy work, including the Offence and Penalty vetting process to ensure offence and penalties are appropriate and consistent
- provide constitutional advice to the government of the day
- ensure proposed legislation meets the requirements of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, and advise the Attorney-General whether Bills are consistent with the Act
- monitor and support independent crown entities, such as the Privacy Commissioner and the Human Rights Commission to uphold human rights
- monitor the Electoral Commission to support its delivery of elections.

## Supporting an independent judiciary

The Judiciary is responsible for the independent exercise of judicial power and for the orderly and efficient conduct of court business. The administrative support we provide sees us working with the Judiciary to uphold the integrity of the courts and tribunals as independent bodies and includes:

- delivering administrative court services to the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, District Court, and Specialist Courts. We also provide support to 27 tribunals in New Zealand
- looking after court safety and participants in court proceedings
- carrying out criminal conviction history checks
- supporting the collection of fines (including victim reparations), the enforcement of civil debt, and the recovery of legal aid debt
- being accountable for the expenditure of public funds needed to administer the courts system
- enabling access to justice
- supporting measures to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the courts.

## Providing a range of justice services

We have more than 4000 people who work in around 100 different locations around the country delivering justice services, which includes:

- providing legal help to people charged with criminal offences through the Public Defence Service, the largest criminal law practice in New Zealand
- administering the Legal Aid system which pays for legal help for people who can't afford a lawyer
- carrying out criminal conviction history checks, helping employers make informed decisions.

## Leading the justice sector

The Ministry of Justice is charged with leading and coordinating the justice sector, which is made up of:

- **Te Tāhū o te Ture – Ministry of Justice**
- **Ara Poutama Aotearoa – Department of Corrections**
- **Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa – New Zealand Police**
- **Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children**
- **Te Tari Ture o te Karauna – Crown Law Office**
- **Te Tari Hara Tāware – Serious Fraud Office.**

We work closely with our sector partners to deliver quality services to participants in the criminal justice system. We do this through:

- progressing our assigned obligations in Government-led initiatives such as the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy and Te Aorerekura (the Government's national strategy for eliminating family violence and sexual violence)
- publishing the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey and other justice sector data to inform the sector's work.

We also support the Justice Sector Leadership Board, comprised of justice sector chief executives and chaired by the Secretary for Justice. The Board, along with associated committees (also supported by our Ministry), is responsible for coordinating major change programmes across the justice sector, improving services and managing investment to achieve collective goals expressed in its Strategic Plan.

The Justice Sector Leadership Board has considerable ambitions for continued transformation across the sector. To support these ambitions, the Justice Sector Leadership Board established a Sector Directorate in April 2022.

The Sector Directorate provides support and leadership with a clearer focus and better-defined functions. The Directorate looks to strengthen the justice sector's ability to collaborate and hone strategy, performance and investment; this includes leading the Justice Budget Cluster work and the first justice sector Long Term Insights Briefing<sup>3</sup>.

## Hosting responsibilities

The Ministry of Justice is the host of the departmental agency, Te Arawhiti (Office of Māori Crown Relations), and the servicing department for Te Puna Aonui, the Executive Board for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence.

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<sup>3</sup>Long-term Insights Briefings are a government initiative requiring agencies to develop and share insights on trends, risks and opportunities in order to identify and explore the issues that matter for the future wellbeing of the people of New Zealand.

# Managing our corporate responsibilities

## Providing governance

The Strategic Leadership Team is collectively responsible for organisational performance. The Strategic Leadership Team sets out our long-term strategic direction, ensuring good foundations, aligned investment decision-making, and assurance over operational performance, so that we can meet our strategic objectives.

Our governance model is made up of the following:

- Board - responsible for setting and monitoring progress towards our strategic direction and priorities
- Business Committee - provides a weekly update of key business and operational events and news, which can include approval of time-critical governance or operational decisions if required
- Health, Safety and Security Committee - leads our health, safety and protective security arrangements. It oversees delivery of our obligations under relevant legislation and internal policies, and makes recommendations to achieve our health, safety and security objectives
- Investment Committee - helps ensure that investment in projects is made visible and governed in a consistent way across the organisation. It oversees the delivery of projects and sub portfolios to support the realisation of our transformational and enduring strategic priorities.

## Managing risk

Effective risk management is critical to achieving our strategic objectives and responsibilities to Aotearoa New Zealand. Our Strategic Leadership Team reviews strategic risks on a quarterly basis, with supporting analysis helping them make decisions to strengthen mitigation activities. Business groups manage operational risks, and projects manage risks associated with transformational initiatives. The risk framework ensures this all happens in a clear, consistent, and holistic manner.

Our internal audit programme provides independent assurance to the Secretary for Justice and senior managers that our system of internal control is operating effectively. The Risk and Assurance Committee provides independent advice and observations to the Secretary for Justice on the quality of risk management processes; internal control mechanisms; internal and external audit functions; integrity of performance information; business improvement initiatives; governance framework and processes; and policies and processes adopted to ensure compliance with legislation, policies, and procedures. Specific fiscal risks are reported to Treasury on a regular basis.

We collaborate with our justice sector partners to understand and manage sector-wide risks, while our continuous improvement approach to risk management sees us regularly refreshing our risk related policies and processes.

## Adaptation and resilience to climate change

The Carbon Neutral Government Programme came into effect in 2020/21, placing expectations on all agencies to accelerate the reduction of emissions within the public sector. We are committed to the programme, and to playing our part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions across Ministry operations.

Our greenhouse gas emissions measurement has been independently verified by Toitū Envirocare. We are proud to be a certified Toitū carbon reduction organisation which means we are measuring, managing and reducing our emission according to the ISO 14064-1:2018 standard and Toitū requirements.

Most of our emissions are from the day to day running of our courthouses and buildings, and from staff travelling for operational needs.

In line with the Carbon Neutral Government programme we have set the following reduction targets:

- reduce gross emissions targets by 21 percent by 2025 compared to baseline year 2020/21
- reduce gross emissions targets by 42 percent by 2030 compared to baseline year 2020/21.

# How we measure our performance

## Measuring progress against our strategy

Monitoring our progress enables us to focus our activities on the areas that will strengthen people's trust in the law of Aotearoa New Zealand and ultimately make the most difference their lives.

The measures we use help us assess the effect of our activities over the medium-term towards achieving our purpose and strategic priorities. We can influence some of the factors that contribute to achieving our purpose and goals, we can't control all of them.

We also know that performance against each of our measures isn't linear; the services we provide and the initiatives we implement can collectively drive change in any given measure. Similarly, a positive shift in performance is often the result of our partners and stakeholders playing a key role in delivering effective justice services to Aotearoa New Zealand.

Overall trust measures				
Measure	Performance Standard/Desired Trend	Results		
		2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
New Zealand's ranking in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index	→ ↑ Maintain or improve	1	1	1
World Justice Project (New Zealand score)	↑ Increase over time	0.83	0.83	0.82
World Justice Project (New Zealand global rank <sup>4</sup> )	↑ Increase over time	7/139	7/128	8/126
Bertelsmann Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI) - Civil rights <sup>5</sup>	↑ Increase over time	10	8	8
World Justice Project - People can access and afford civil justice <sup>6</sup>	↑ Increase over time	0.73	0.72	0.72
Overall, people's levels of trust in the justice system (both those that have and haven't engaged with the justice system) <sup>7</sup>	↑ Increase over time	New measure	New measure	New measure
Māori level of trust in the justice system (both those that have and haven't engaged with the justice system) <sup>8</sup>	↑ Increase over time	New measure	New measure	New measure
Institutional Trust – trust in the courts as measured by the New Zealand General Social Survey	↑ Increase over time	64.2%	The General Social Survey was not conducted in 2019/20, 2020/21	
Institutional Trust – trust by Māori in the courts as measured by the New Zealand General Social Survey	↑ Increase over time	43.6%		

<sup>4</sup>Overall measure that takes into account the following factors: constraints on government powers; absence of corruption; open government; fundamental rights; order and security; regulatory enforcement; civil justice and criminal justice

<sup>5</sup>Indicates the quality of democracy, measuring equal access to the law and equal treatment by the law. The state respects and protects civil rights and citizens are protected by courts against infringements of their rights

<sup>6</sup>Indicates the accessibility and affordability of civil courts, including whether people are aware of available remedies, can access and afford legal advice and representation; and can access the court system without incurring unreasonable fees, encountering unreasonable procedural hurdles or experiencing physical or linguistic barriers

<sup>7</sup>Sourced from the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey; results to be available from 2025

<sup>8</sup>Sourced from the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey; results to be available from 2025.

Broader sector measures				
Measure	Performance Standard/Desired Trend	Results		
		2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Proportion of adults who have experienced one or more victimisation incidents in the past year <sup>9</sup>	↓ Decrease over time	29%	29%	30%
Proportion of Māori adults who have experienced one or more victimisation incidents in the past year <sup>10</sup>	↓ Decrease over time	34%	35%	38%
Percentage of people sentenced within two years after completion of a previous sentence	↓ Decrease over time	New measure	New measure	New measure
The proportion of serious harm cases resolved within 12 months	↑ Increase over time to 90%	77%	80%	83%
Number of criminal cases in the District Court defined as "backlog" <sup>11</sup>	↓ Decrease over time	New measure	New measure	New measure
Number of family applications in the Family Court defined as "backlog" <sup>12</sup>	↓ Decrease over time	New measure	New measure	New measure

## Building our culture and capability

We want our Ministry to be a place where our people can reach their potential and play their part in our successes. Our culture and capability priorities represent what we're focusing on to ensure we have the diversity and capability we need to deliver improved outcomes for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Measure	Performance Standard/Desired Trend	Results		
		2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Employee wellbeing score	↑ Increase over time	New measure	New measure	New measure
Gender pay gap	↓ Decrease over time	10.6%	12.9%	12.0%
Unplanned turnover rate	↓ Decrease over time	20.8%	15.8%	12.9%

## Measuring our service performance

We monitor our operational and service performance to ensure we're delivering the services we committed to.

Our performance measures are set out in the Estimates of Appropriations for Vote Justice and Vote Courts, along with internal performance measures that provide a detailed assessment of our operational performance.

These measures are reported on regularly to the Ministry's Strategic Leadership Team and are included in the Ministry of Justice's Annual Report.

<sup>9</sup>Sourced from the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey

<sup>10</sup>Sourced from the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey

<sup>11</sup>The definition of a "backlog" criminal case in the District Court is still to be determined, in conjunction with the judiciary

<sup>12</sup>The definition of a "backlog" family application in the Family Court is still to be determined, in conjunction with the judiciary.



